

deep economic hole? After all, their tax cuts have dug us into a \$650 billion deficit in the coming year, so maybe we just cannot afford unemployment benefits any more. No, actually there is \$17 billion in the Unemployment Trust Fund, money paid in by workers and their employers, sitting on deposit, or actually not, they borrowed the money and spent it on something else.

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But at least there is a credit for \$17 billion; and, in fact, they are expecting that because of the taxes levied for unemployment benefits, that that fund will actually grow in the coming year, as 1.1 million people exhaust their benefits, do not find jobs, and cannot get an extension.

Now, the Republicans have a couple of arguments as to why they think this is a good thing. They think it is a good thing because the unemployment rate is low. Well, yes, actually, the way they keep the books, the unemployment rate is low. All of these workers, these 1.1 million who will have exhausted their benefits will no longer be considered to be in the workforce, and they will not be counted as unemployed. It is sort of a beautiful thing they have created here. If everybody in America lost their job today, a year from today, when they had all exhausted their unemployment benefits and no one had gotten a job back, if they had all been outsourced to India or somewhere else, we would have zero unemployment, according to the Bush administration, the way they keep the books. So that is a pretty phony argument, and you do not have to travel very far in America to find people who want work and cannot find it. Certainly in my State, that is not hard at all.

Then they say, now the Republicans have decided that unemployment benefits are welfare. Yes, that is true: an earned benefit for people who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, most often through trade policies that exported their jobs or misplaced budget priorities on the part of this administration and tax policies and trickle down economics. Those people, they say, are just a bunch of welfare cheats, because they say that this would discourage people from going out and finding work if we extended unemployment benefits.

Mr. Speaker, that is the most outrageous thing. I mean, I guess a lot of these Republicans and the Bush administration do not know real people and they have not gone out and walked the streets and gone into the malls and talked to people who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, cannot find work, and just wanted a little bit of help so that they can keep their household together, so they can make the bare minimum payments on their house, their utilities, and put food on their table for their kids. The Bush people think, well, that is welfare. It is an earned benefit. People paid these

taxes. There is money sitting in the unemployment trust fund. They should just give us a straight up-or-down vote.

Well, that is sort of the third thing here, is the Republican leadership does not want a straight up-or-down vote on this issue. Why? Because if we had a straight up-or-down vote in the United States House of Representatives and in the United States Senate on an extension of unemployment benefits, to spend some of the money out of the trust fund to help these 1.1 million people who cannot find jobs and their benefits are exhausted, it would pass overwhelmingly. So they will not allow us a vote. We managed to attach an amendment to an unrelated bill and finally did trigger a vote on that, and it was amusing to watch all of the Republicans line up on the other side of the aisle after they had been beat to heck by their leadership to change their votes one after another after another after another, because they did not want to be on the wrong side of the issue.

But then their leader got up at the end of the day and said, do not worry, that will never come out of conference. Why will that not come out of conference? Why will not the will of the people of the elected House of Representatives, who voted 227 to 179 in a tangential way of extending unemployment benefits, and who voted more overwhelmingly to up front extend those unemployment benefits, why will he not let that come out of conference? The money is in the trust fund, the suffering is real, people need some help. Let us have an up-or-down vote and extend unemployment benefits for all Americans.

ALAN BABIN, A TRUE TEXAS WAR HERO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, tonight I stand here to recognize one of Texas's finest soldiers and a true Texas hero. On March 31, 2003, Alan Babin of the First Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment started his second day of war. On that day, the third platoon, a platoon that he had recently joined, was working to secure a bridge on the Euphrates River near Samawah when enemy fire intensified and a soldier took a shot in the head. Alan, who was a paratrooper medic, gave up cover and sprinted the 20 meters to aid the soldier. In that sprint, Alan took a shot in the belly. That single action has warranted Alan the title of war hero; a purple heart, a bronze star medal with V for valor. However, neither Alan's brave action nor the rewards that followed came at a small price.

Alan is a fourth generation military man. Both his mother and father served in the military. Now he is fighting a second battle, and it is a long

battle. He is fighting that battle from a hospital room.

Today he has undergone over 70 surgeries. He has battled severe infection, meningitis, and stroke. Alan lay on the battlefield for 3 hours in pain until he was evacuated to the USS *Comfort* where he received excellent medical treatment by the folks there and very loving people that took care of him; but in the process, he suffered a stroke, and this infection grew rampant in his entire abdominal cavity. Most people did not think Alan was going to make it. The doctors said, if you are people of faith, you need to begin to pray.

My colleagues need to understand Alan's family. His mother, Rosy, and his dad, Alan, and his sister Christy, they went to the task. Rosy started e-mailing her friends and relatives and neighbors in Round Rock, Texas, and in the rest of Texas; and this spread throughout the entire country until thousands of people began to pray for this young man and to send encouragement.

When we got Alan finally here at Walter Reed, he was still with an exposed abdominal cavity, which had to be washed every night to fight the infection, and this 23-year-old man was fighting that battle with his mother by his side, and she has vowed not to leave his side until he is well. His little sister came up here to visit him. His dad was here by his side. Now, these folks, along with the folks back in Round Rock, Texas, are helping Alan battle through this terrible tragedy.

Alan continues to persevere daily, and he is overcoming all of the odds and the doctors say, whatever you are doing, keep doing it. These obstacles are being overcome. Just the other day I ran into Rosy in church and she told me, Alan actually picked up his glasses and put them on his own nose. That shows his motor skills are coming back from the stroke. That little victory was a huge thing for his mother. They have closed his wounds; the infection is going away. He has come from months and months in bed to therapy sessions. In the doctors' eyes and in the generals' eyes, this young man has overcome the worst odds that anybody can overcome. Now, each day it is a blessing that he continues to recover.

His service and his sacrifice has not gone unnoticed. The folks back home, knowing that Alan would not be able to climb stairs, the folks in Round Rock, Texas, the builders and contractors went and built a room on their two-story house at ground level so that Alan will be able to negotiate to and from his bedroom when he gets to come home. The whole community is behind this family.

During his stay at Walter Reed Hospital, he was visited by many, many people, including President Bush, Vice President CHENEY, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Members of Congress, and numerous other military officials. I was there when he was awarded his

medals, and one could see what was important in this young man's heart, because every time they called him paratrooper, his eyes sparkled and one could tell that he knew that they were talking about something of which he was proud.

Today is almost the anniversary of that tremendous wound that Alan suffered. He is recovering, through the grace of God and some wonderful medical people across this country. He is now back at least in Texas undergoing therapy, recovering every day, only because he and his family are true heroes who support the effort of this country and are proud of the service of their son. Alan, along with his family, serves as an inspiration for his fellow soldiers, as well as his fellow Texans. We in Texas are very proud of Alan and we say, God bless America and God bless Alan for his sacrifice. Alan Babin is a Texas hero.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONNECTING THE DOTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I believe it was Abraham Lincoln who said, "You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." Until recently, the Bush administration has fooled some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time on Social Security, Medicare, tax cuts for the rich, economic recovery, the No Child Left Behind Act, nation-building, the war against terrorism, and, most especially, the war in Iraq. The President has been able to do this because most Americans simply do not believe that the President of the United States would distort and deceive on such basic issues as war and the well-being of children and the elderly.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind the gentleman not to make personal references to the President.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, during the 2 days of the hearings of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, it was clear that the time for the fooling of the people may be running out. Of course, there are those Americans inside and outside of Congress who always question the veracity of the President's arguments for going to war. My hope is that the testimony at the hearings, along with a series of

widely publicized books and articles published in the last year or so, the latest being Richard Clarke's "Against All Enemies," will enable the broader public to connect the dots to the truth. I believe they will see that the dots of deception lead straight to the Oval Office.

This response of administration officials to Mr. Clarke's charge that the President has done a terrible job on the war against terrorism is typical: throw sand into the public's eyes. Bait and switch. In other words, attack a person's motives while refusing to address the substance of the critique. Hide the facts. Concoct data. Delay. Blame everything on Clinton. Do the opposite of what you say. Claim not to remember a conversation or a meeting. Insist on redacting critical portions of critical congressional reports. Accuse critics of being disgruntled employees. All to cover up arrogant, reckless, and disgraceful conduct of foreign and domestic policy.

We should commend those public servants who, in the aftermath of 9/11-PATRIOT Act hysteria, have put loyalty to country above loyalty to the President, risking their careers to shed light on the dark underside of George W. Bush's Presidency. This lengthening list includes the Minneapolis and Phoenix-based FBI agent who revealed that FBI field operatives tried to get higher-ups to pay attention to individuals on the counterterrorism watch list, including several who later crashed airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, were in the United States taking flying lessons; the joint inquiry of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees that revealed serious lapses on the part of the senior administration and intelligence officials during the lead-up to 9/11; John Wilson, a former ambassador, who disputed the claim that Saddam Hussein had sought uranium fuel in Niger, Africa. Wilson rejected the tales of the President and Vice President, Defense Secretary, Secretary of State, and National Security Adviser were telling about Saddam's alleged nuclear weapons program and, as we now know, the White House retaliated by telling a journalist that Wilson's wife was a covert CIA operative.

In a book by Ron Suskind, former Treasury Department Paul O'Neill insists that from the very beginning, the administration and the President were fixated on invading Iraq. Mr. O'Neill, who told the President that a second round of tax cuts would damage the economy, and also reveals that Vice President CHENEY contended that Ronald Reagan had proved that deficits do not matter.

David Kay head of the CIA's Iraq Survey Group, congressional testimony that no weapons of mass destruction had been found, that no weapons of mass destruction were likely to ever be found, and that frankly, the administration and the intelligence community had it all wrong. And now, Rich-

ard Clarke, a senior counterterrorism official in the Reagan, Clinton, and both Bush administrations, who says immediately after 9/11, the President and other senior officials were focused more on finding a pretext for attacking Iraq than on finding Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda.

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Clarke quotes Defense Secretary Rumsfeld as saying there were not any good targets to bomb in Afghanistan but plenty in Iraq. Mr. Clarke also contends that invading Iraq was a priority even before the President took office.

If what Clarke, Kay, O'Neill and others have said is true, then it is fair to not only say weapons of mass destruction was a hype but also that every new explanation the administration has given since it declared an end to major operations is part of a cover-up of a war of choice, not necessity.

This is the context in which the public can connect the dots of the administration's attempts to obstruct the joint congressional Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence investigation of 9/11 and its belated cooperation and then only under the threat of subpoena with the independent commission investigating intelligence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SENDING OUR TROOPS INTO BATTLE WITHOUT ADEQUATE PROTECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I probably will not take my 5 minutes, but I was standing here, sitting here listening to my colleague from Texas talk about the young man who had been wounded and was recovering. And I am reminded that there are some nearly now 600 soldiers who have lost their lives in Iraq and we do not know for sure but somewhere between 3,500 and 4,000 have been seriously injured.

I think it is a sad and a tragic fact that the President, Secretary Rumsfeld, this administration, sent our troops into battle without providing them with adequate protection. As a result, there are those who probably have lost their lives simply because they did not have body armor; and there are those who have lost their limbs simply because this administration has not taken care of the problem of unarmored Humvees in Iraq.

Many, many months ago I wrote Secretary Rumsfeld a letter after I had received a letter from a young soldier in